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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR
DEVELOPMENT

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

1. In its resolution 1990/82, the Economic and Social Council requests the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session a precise and comprehensive schedule for the implementation of all the provisions of Assembly resolution 44/211 of 22 December 1989 that require action by the United Nations system, concentrating on those activities that, in his view, require priority attention. The requested schedule is contained in section I of the annex to the present note.

2. In paragraph 17 (g) of General Assembly resolution 44/211, the Director-General was requested to provide to the Assembly at its forty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council, his views on the impact of an approach towards an integrated operational response of the United Nations system at the country level to the national programme framework of the recipient Government for operational activities for development. Preliminary views were submitted to the Council in a conference room paper. However, the Director-General indicated that there had not been sufficient time to obtain the views of Governments, resident co-ordinators and country teams, and that he would provide these views at a later date, which he undertook to do. Accordingly, section II of the annex contains views of the Director-General and reflects the information provided in the above-mentioned conference room paper, as well as a synthesis of the reports that have been received from resident co-ordinators, on the matters arising from paragraph 17 (g) of General Assembly resolution 44/211.

3. In his annual report for 1990 (A/45/273-E/1990/85, annex), the Director-General provided a summary of the first responses received from resident

co-ordinators to the provisions contained in paragraph 18 of General Assembly resolution 44/211 concerning national execution of programmes and projects assisted by the United Nations system. Section III of the annex to the present note contains a synthesis of the reports of all resident co-ordinators received to date on the subject of national execution of programmes and projects assisted by the United Nations system.

4. In the interest of reducing the issuance of separate addenda to his annual report, the Director-General further provides, in section IV of the annex, a report on the establishment of common premises, as requested by the Assembly in paragraph 15 (d) of resolution 44/211.

ANNEX

Report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation on Operational Activities

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I. REVISED SCHEDULE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/211

A. Introduction

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 44/211, the Director-General submitted a preliminary schedule for its implementation (A/45/273) which was considered by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1990. In its resolution 1990/82, the Council requested the Director-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session a precise and comprehensive schedule for the implementation of all the provisions of resolution 44/211, concentrating on those activities which, in his view, require priority attention. As requested, a revised schedule is provided herewith.

2. As reflected in the deliberations and resolution of the Economic and Social Council, Member States wish to see more concrete evidence of projected action by the United Nations system to implement the provisions of resolution 44/211. While some information additional to that contained in the preliminary schedule is now available, and various entities already reported pre-existing policies in line with resolution 44/211, it should be noted that the governing bodies of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the Universal Postal Union (UPU) have not yet met to consider the resolution (for details, see A/45/272, annex). The June 1990 meeting of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Governing Council did adopt relevant decisions, and the information herein accordingly refers to those organizations more than to those noted above. However, the implementation of these decisions is only now getting under way and, in some important aspects, will require further decisions, in 1991 before precise implementation can result. Accordingly, detailed information on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211 remains limited.

3. In this connection, the Director-General recalls the understanding of Member States, as expressed in paragraph 31 of resolution 44/211, that governing bodies would have to make adjustments required to implement eight of its most important action provisions, and that information on the measures taken would be available to the Director-General starting in 1991. There are no grounds for abridging this perspective held by Member States when framing resolution 44/211. The revised schedule presented herein provides such information as can be assembled by the beginning of September 1990 within the constraints noted above.

4. A "precise and comprehensive schedule for the implementation of all the provisions requiring action by the United Nations system" would, however, involve presentation on measures extending over three years on over 20 distinct action paragraphs and subparagraphs covering over 20 discrete entities of the system engaged in operational activities of varying volume, deploying resources from

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different levels, and having separate governing bodies meeting on different calendars. At the same time, the Council requested the Director-General to "concentrate" on those activities which, in his view, require priority attention. The provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211 are so interrelated that it is difficult to assign priorities. However, the Director-General has attempted to organize the action required around themes that reflect a basic framework for the implementation of the resolution, namely, decentralization, full use of national capacities, programming provisions, and the country-level capacities of the system.

5. The Director-General would like to express his appreciation for the prompt and co-operative response by the relevant entities of the United Nations system in providing material for the present report. It should be noted that the report represents a severe compression of the information made available and should also be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the 1990 annual report of the Director-General (A/45/273, annex).

B. Decentralization

6. Decentralization under resolution 44/211 essentially involves the delegation, from headquarters (or regional) level to the country level, of various elements of authority for preparation and approval of operational programmes and projects for development at that country level, and the concomitant strengthening of the system's country-level capacities therefor.

7. Decentralization is thus a frame for many of the provisions of resolution 44/211. It will enhance, in particular, the implementation of paragraphs 15 to 18, 20, and 21. The following are important notes on the summary of the status of plans for decentralization contained in table 1 below.

(a) The entities cited in the table are for the most part those with staff at the country (or regional) level to which they are to be decentralized and include in particular the funding agencies;

(b) Certain elements in the strengthening of the country-level capacities of the system will become clearer in 1991, with final determination of UNDP and UNFPA successor arrangements for agency support costs. Other elements, concerning staff redeployment, establishment or strengthening of field presence, and technical support at the country level, will reflect decisions to be made regarding regular budgets of agencies and United Nations bodies for the next (1992-1993) biennium.

8. It will be seen from the foregoing table that extensive and intensive plans are now under way for decentralization, particularly in the light of the relevant decisions of the UNDP Governing Council in June 1990. The UNDP Governing Council has provided a most powerful impetus to a major reshaping of operational activities in such a way that programming and implementation capacities, authority and initiative will henceforth be located far more at the country level.

Table 1

Decentralization

(Paragraphs 23, 24, 26)

Organization	1990	1991	1992 and after
UNDP	Approval authority up to $700,000 to country level to include national execution of projects	Report to Governing Council on decentralization	
	Country office and headquarters appraisal of large-scale projects	Approval of strategy to streamline appraisal and further decentralize to country offices	Shift of large-scale appraisal and preparation to country offices
	Governing Council decision 90/26, paras. 8, 9 on support costs	Proposals to Governing Council: technical support services to country level	Technical support services operational
	Develop country offices' programme MIS a/	Progressively install country offices' MIS a/	All country offices to have MIS a/ during fifth cycle
	Local personnel functions now decentralized	Propose to decentralize other functions	Implement maximum functional decentralized
		Budget proposals to Governing Council favouring country staffing	Implement Governing Council decision 1992/93

Table 1 (continued)

Organization	1990	1991	1992 and after
UNFPA	Doubled, now to $500,000*	Review guidelines	Review levels
	Country office consultancy fund ($50,000)	Will add new country office retainer for national expertise	Improve
		Budget proposals to Governing Council emphasizing country staffing	Implement Governing Council decision on 1992-1993
UNICEF	All major aspects of country programme preparation to be carried out by country office. Principal review also to take place at country level. Revisions of country programme will be continually undertaken at country level in ongoing daily dialogue with Government.		
WFP	Review programme and administrative delegation	Implement	Implement
IFAD	N/A	N/A	N/A
ILO	Comprehensive study on headquarters regional and area/ country office functions and relationship	Implementation as appropriate	As 1991

* For new projects, supplementary budgets, and revisions.

Table 1 (continued)

Organization	1990	1991	1992 and after
	Strengthening regional services	As 1990	Strengthening ILO presence in regions in a flexible, cost-effective manner, contingent on budgetary decisions
FAO	Decentralization measures being implemented on selective basis as result of 1989 Review of Certain Aspects of Fao's Goals and Operations. Field offices will be strengthened, decision-making authority for projects, budget revisions, and staffing with national personnel will increasingly be delegated to FAO representatives. Being monitored by governing bodies.		
UNESCO	Decision to use headquarters savings to finance stronger field staffing	Creation of 10 new P-level posts	12 new P-level posts
	Executive Board study on decentralization	Report to plenary session (Oct.)	Implement decisions
	50 per cent of project implementation delegated to field offices	65 per cent delegated to field offices	80 per cent delegated to field offices
UNIDO	Proposal to increase number of country directors (UNDP funding)	Increase staff dependent on UNDP sectoral support programme, support costs decisions, and special contributions	As 1991

Table 1 (continued)

Organization	1990	1991	1992 and after
ITU	Decentralizing to regions	Will follow UNDP decentralization	Follow UNDP
UPU		Multi-year project execution by national co-ordinators	Delegate some project authority to national co-ordinators
Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities)	Discuss issues of decentralization at regular session (Oct.)	Adopt inter-agency position on decentralization	

a/ MIS = Programme management information system.

9. Detailed responses of some specialized agencies to the decentralization provisions of resolution 44/211 will be developed in coming months following the consideration of the resolution by their governing bodies. Redeployment to provide for decentralization will also be developed, contingent on budgetary decisions.

10. Present constraints on the regular budgets of some agencies mean that this process must proceed selectively, as noted by FAO. The decisions of governing bodies, expected by 1991, will provide guidance for a significant degree of decentralization of programming and other authority to the country level by the end of 1992. The further work that will need to be done to optimize these more formal aspects of decentralization, in substantive and creative results at the country level, is outlined in the complementary elements of the schedule, hereunder.

C. Use of national capacities

11. The provisions of resolution 44/211 regarding full use of national capacities in, and government on national execution of, programmes and projects do not, by definition, lend themselves to precise timetables for completion, since the implementation must be country-specific along a wide spectrum of circumstances.

12. The attention of States members of governing bodies is drawn to actions within the system that are:

(a) Changing the policy stance of organizations regarding these requirements, resulting in fresh policy directives to staff;

(b) Providing funds and other resources for new or intensified assistance to Governments in developing national capacities, not only in traditional institution-building but in far more on-the-job involvement of national personnel in the programme and project formulation and implementation cycle;

(c) Intensifying training specifically designed to enhance national programme management and administrative capacities;

(d) Seeking practical means to overcome obstacles in existing rules and procedures, especially for national execution, and other impediments to sustainability.

13. Table 2 summarizes further information now available regarding this priority group of provisions of resolution 44/211.

14. Table 2 projects significantly enhanced action by the United Nations system on the utilization of national capacities and the progressive assumption of national execution responsibilities for programmes and projects assisted by the system. The reform of national civil service and the development of procedures for utilization of other national institutions are of major importance in fulfilling these objectives.

Table 2

National capacities and execution

(Paragraphs 13 and 18)

Organization	1990	1991	1992
UNDP	Governing Council decision 90/21	Proposals to Governing Council to assist Governments to build programme management and administrative capacities	Implement decision
	Governing Council decision 90/21: pursue, accelerate national execution	Implement new guidelines for national execution	Full launch in fifth cycle
	Governing Council decision 90/26	Proposals to Governing Council for technical services support by agencies	Technical services support in full operation
	Pilot Development Support Service to fund national consultants to Governments	Further proposals to Governing Council	Implement decision
	Governing Council decision 90/16: support civil service reform programmes i.e. by co-ordinated short-term incentive payments	Implement new guidelines for assistance including short-term incentives	Continue
Joint Consultative Group on Policy a/		Joint Consultative Group on Policy Task Force to examine local salary supplements	

Table 2 (continued)

Organization	1990	1991	1992
UNFPA	Governing Council decision 90/35: encourage increased use of national expertise	Implement	Continue implementing
	PRSD guidelines in force, including analysis of national capacities	Further develop in the light of UNDP Governing Council decision (above)	Implement
	Draft new guidelines for national execution	Issue and begin implementing new guidelines	Continue implementing
	Formulate new modalities for agencies' roles in execution	Begin implementing new agency modalities	Continue implementing
UNICEF	Policy directive on national capacity-building		
	Priority initiative on community level capacity-building for primary health care (Bamako Initiative). Policy review and implementation approach on support to recurrent and local costs.		
WFP	All projects already nationally executed. Further training of national personnel in food-assisted project cycle and logistics.		
IFAD	All programmes and projects already nationally executed.		

Table 2 (continued)

Organization	1990	1991	1992
	Note: Specialized agencies and other executing agencies advise that their capacities to provide support to national execution are heavily dependent upon UNDP 1991 proposals to, and Governing Council decision concerning, successor agency support costs arrangements. Entries below are therefore only for entities able to provide other recent information on implementation additional to A/45/273 (paras. 55-134).		
Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities)	Will consider a common United Nations system approach to enhanced utilization of national capacities and national execution at its 2nd 1990 meeting (Oct.).		
ILO	New Turin Centre seminars for national officials	Further training at Turin and/or in countries	Continue implementing
UNESCO	Creation of new unit with six Professionals in charge of mounting sector-study workshops (since June 1989) Sector-analysis and programming workshops with national officials (30-40 workshops initiated from headquarters; others from field offices)	Same type of workshops but number increases to 40-50	Same type of workshops but number increases to 50-55
	Drafting of "operational activities manual" for field offices	Dissemination of the manual and use as a training tool	

Table 2 (continued)

Organization	1990	1991	1992
FAO			Use of new support costs to provide increasing specific services to nationally executed projects
	Steadily raise use of national project directors (400 at present) and Professional staff (800 at present). Within present financial constraints, repeat and enlarge special training courses for national directors.		
UNIDO	Training workshops on project design, evaluation for government officers	Issue staff instructions on national execution/ use of capacities following Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities)	Continue training
United Nations-Department of Technical Co-operation for Development	New directives to staff based on 44/211, para. 13; inter-agency collaboration based on para. 18	Pursue implementation	As 1991
	Develop training, other project work on "process" aspects (recruitment, contracts, procurement) for strengthened government units. Discuss at biennial Meeting of National Recruitment Services	Implement resultant training, other programmes of assistance to government units	As 1991

Table 2 (continued)

Organization	1990	1991	1992
	Develop computer and training packages systems for monitoring project implementation	Install and commence operation of systems	As 1991
UNCTAD	New directives on 44/211 policy change to review with Government the desirability and feasibility of national execution or UNCTAD project implementation, commencing late 1990.		
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements	Start new data base on national capacities	Develop data base	Inter-link data bases
IAEA	Training seminars for government officials in programming, monitoring and evaluation of projects in Asia, Latin America	Seminars as 1990 in African countries	Continue training
ITU		Introduce new national capacity project line	Implement in UNDP fifth cycle
		Seek appointment of national project co-ordinators in all developing countries	Implement in fifth cycle projects

a/ UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, IFAD and WFP will concert approaches to national salary supplements and other emoluments. Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) is also dealing with this question.

D. Programming provisions

(Paragraph 17)

15. The overall premise of paragraph 17 is that Governments of developing countries will formulate national programme frameworks setting out the co-operation requirements of the system. The United Nations system can contribute to this only where Governments request its assistance in formulating such frameworks (see annex II). In addition, the system can only adapt its programming processes to such frameworks as and where they exist or are newly formulated.

16. The implementation of those provisions of resolution 44/211 related to policies and approaches to the programming of the assistance of the United Nations system will be profoundly influenced by the extent of genuine decentralization that takes place, by the new policies noted earlier for a vigorous acceleration of national execution, and by the composition and structure of the United Nations system's capacities at and available to the country level (paras. 15 and 16).

17. As earlier reported, the members of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy have already agreed on a joint letter to their country officials calling for the harmonization of programme cycles with those of Governments at their request. It is expected that such harmonization will for the most part begin to take effect in and after 1992.

18. As indicated in the main text of the Director-General's 1990 annual report, the adoption of improved programming approaches and processes will require a reasonable degree of common understanding within the system of an expanding number of concepts and terms. This can enhance the simplification and harmonization of programming rules and procedures around those of Governments, and clear additional mandates for more coherent programming can be agreed for and assigned to resident co-ordinators and their country team colleagues.

19. With regard to the ultimate implementation by the system of paragraph 17, namely, some form of "integrated operational response to national programme frameworks" (para. 17 (g)), Member States have not yet concluded their consideration of this provision.

20. Table 3 also includes action on the simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures, in sequence with the substantive work that must first be carried out. The table is largely a system forecast, and is therefore less detailed than table 2. The work required must, by its nature, be substantially guided by inter-agency agreements based to a considerable extent upon initiatives from funding agencies.

Table 3

Improvements in programming processes

(Paragraphs 15, 17)

Provisions of 44/211	1990	1991	1992
More integrated and co-ordinated programming (17)	Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) reviews programming paper	Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) orientation of country representatives	Continue
	JCGP prepares notes for use at country level	Local JCGP groups in selected countries to apply with Governments	Continue
	JCGP harmonization sub-group proposes definitions of key concepts, terms	Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) reviews and adopts for system as a whole	Apply
Harmonize programme cycles (17 (c))	JCGP joint letter instruction	Consult with all Governments	Adopt
Shift to programme approach (17 (d))	UNDP preparing technical services support I proposals	UNDP Governing Council adopts technical services support I	Implement with system

Table 3 (continued)

Provisions of 44/211	1990	1991	1992
Simplify and harmonize rules and procedures (18 (b))	Development and International Economic Co-operation and UNDP proposals for methodology to JCGP, Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities)	Initiate in countries with Governments	Continue adoption with Governments
Assist in national progr. frameworks on request (17 (a))	UNDP decisions to associate agencies in NaTCAPs a/ process, greater use of United Nations-Department of Technical Co-operation for Development technical and management services	Implement Implement on Government requests	Continue Continue
Integrated operational response (17 (g))	Forty-fifth General Assembly considers	System acts accordingly	Continue
Improve multi-disciplinary advice (15 a.c.)	UNDP technical services support proposals Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) reviews	Governing Council decision Adopts Development and International Economic Co-operation special report to General Assembly	Implement Implement

Table 3 (continued)

Provisions of 44/211	1990	1991	1992
Integration of food aid with development programmes (17 (e))		WFP consultation with Governments and appropriate United Nations agencies	Proposals to CFA Economic and Social Council General Assembly
	1990 UNICEF instructions to field offices encouraging active cross-participation in organizations programme processes; similar instructions to share UNICEF experience with a decentralized programme approach (as per Executive Board resolution).		

a/ National Technical Co-operation Assessment and Programmes.

21. It will be noted in table 3 that the task-force work on programming to which the Director-General referred in the main text of his 1990 annual report is now getting under way. Both the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy are involved in such initiatives. The table indicates how these special efforts should be harmonized.

22. Considerable emphasis is being placed on evolving new and more coherent programming approaches directly at the country level. Member organizations of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy will be undertaking special exercises in collaborative programming on a number of themes or multidisciplinary needs, with the agreement of Governments concerned, in selected developing countries. Work on the simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures is also envisaged as best carried out at the country level and from the country perspective, to ensure that the process fully responds to decentralization, and to evolve ways of mutually adapting rules and procedures with those of Governments.

E. Structure and composition of country-level capacities

23. All of the foregoing steps in implementation will, however, ultimately depend upon the mandates and resources provided to, the quality and qualifications of, and the organization of the relationships among, the staff of the United Nations system working at the country level.

24. Essentially, this involves the implementation of paragraphs 15, 16 and 26 of resolution 44/211. The core of this work clearly revolves around the comprehensive report, with specific recommendations, which the Director-General is required under paragraph 16 to submit in 1991 on improvement and increased effectiveness of the field representation of the system in accordance with the functions of the resolution. Closely complementing this report must be his analysis of possible ways to provide ongoing multidisciplinary technical advice at the country level, including the concept of multidisciplinary teams, also required (para. 15 (c)) for 1991.

25. In this connection the Director-General wishes to recommend that these particular reports be submitted in 1991 directly to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. The 1991 decisions of the UNDP Governing Council on successor arrangements for support costs (and the remaining basic considerations of resolution 44/211 by governing bodies of major agencies) must be taken into account in the final assembly of the reports. This will not be possible in time for submitting to the Economic and Social Council.

26. A schedule for the implementation of paragraphs 15, 16 and 26 is presented in table 4 below. Details of the present and projected work in implementation of paragraph 15 (d) on the establishment of common premises are provided separately, in section IV of the present document.

Table 4

Terms of reference, staffing, other resources for, and structure of United Nations system at country level for implementation of resolution 44/211

(Paragraphs 16, 15 (c) and others)

Provisions of 44/211	1990	1991	1992
National programme frameworks and integrated operational response (17)	United Nations General Assembly decision on 17 (g)	Development and International Economic Co-operation proposes additional terms of reference for United Nations Resident Co-ordinator and country team to JCGP, then to Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities)	
Improvement of effectiveness of field representation of system (16)	Development and International Economic Co-operation receives, analyses information from system including updating 1986 Joint Inspection Unit report	Development and International Economic Co-operation, assembles outline of new needs at country (and regional) level in light of resolution 44/211, forty-fifth General Assembly decision on 17 (g), and governing bodies' decisions	
Provision on ongoing multidisciplinary technical advice and teams (15 (c))	Development and International Economic Co-operation prepares terms of reference for analysis based on system-wide assessments	Correlates the methodology for both studies; initiates them	

Table 4 (continued)

Provisions of 44/211	1990	1991	1992
Common understanding of programming concepts and terms		Incorporates work of JCGP and the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) on terms, and country team (17 (g))	
Agency support costs (25) and redefinition of participation of specialized agencies (19)		Incorporates June UNDP Governing Council decisions in frames of both studies	
		Submits both reports to forty-sixth General Assembly	Begin re-shaping country teams

27. It will be seen from table 4 above that many of the implementation processes outlined in earlier tables will flow into the work to enhance the system's capacities at the country level. The 1991 report by the Director-General on improving the effectiveness of field representation (para. 16), and on provision of multidisciplinary advice (para. 15 (c)), will include recommendations to improve the country (and regional) capacities of the United Nations system in accordance with the objectives and functions laid down in resolution 44/211. Thus, the analysis from which he will frame his recommendations will be based on the requisite shape and extent of decentralization (table 1), and on the objective of full use of national capacities and accelerated national execution (table 2). It will draw on the work under way to achieve improved, more coherent and sustainable programming (table 3), including Member States' guidance on paragraph 17 (g). The report will also take into account decisions in 1991 concerning agency support costs (para. 25), and their impact on the redefinition of the participation of specialized agencies (para. 19).

F. Summary

28. In summary, the Director-General believes that the foregoing report does indicate important new activity on implementation of resolution 44/211, even at this still early stage. The broad lines of the emergent schedule may be summarized as follows.

29. In 1990, the United Nations system is largely in preparatory phase for the implementation. It is also a year of major transition in such closely related matters as UNDP's preparations for its fifth programme cycle (1992-1996), and in the elaboration of successor agency support costs arrangements.

30. None the less, organizations are preparing detailed plans for decentralization. Decisions have been taken for more vigorous action on the use of national capacities, and for the acceleration of national execution. Both individual organizations and inter-agency mechanisms are actively addressing the issues of more coherent and sustainable programming, and there has been the important Joint Consultative Group on Policy instruction on harmonization of programme cycles. System-wide agreements on enhancing the role of the resident co-ordinator, and on more substantive collaboration among country teams of the system, have been issued. In addition, significant new, or intensified staff training programmes have been developed, notably the new Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) programme for the orientation of country teams using the services of the ILO International Training Centre at Turin.

31. In 1991, the responses of governing bodies to the resolution will be translated into implementation plans by those secretariats of the specialized agencies and technical entities that have been awaiting such guidance during 1990. Important further, or new decisions are due to be taken by the UNDP Governing Council related to decentralization, resources to enhance use of national capacities and national execution and other programming needs, and the future participation of agencies.

32. At the same time, 1990 action plans not needing governing body decisions will begin to be implemented. These will include the selective collaborative programming under Joint Consultative Group on Policy auspices; the development of system-wide common understanding and guidelines on key concepts and terms such as shifting to the programme approach; work on the simplification, harmonization, and adaptation of rules and procedures; and implementation of new guidelines on use of national capacities and on national execution. Assuming General Assembly guidance at its forty-fifth session on the concept of an integrated operational response of the system to national programme frameworks (para. 17 (g)), in 1991 the Director-General will issue to resident co-ordinators, and heads of other entities will issue to their country-level officials, new terms of reference and guidelines for the implementation of this provision.

33. Also in 1991, the new programme for orientation of country teams will begin its series of workshops, with their content appropriately influenced by these various advances in related provisions of the resolution.

34. As already noted, at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, Member States will consider the reports they have requested of the Director-General on improving the effectiveness of field representation, and on multidisciplinary advice and the concept of multidisciplinary teams at the country level.

35. The third year of the schedule (1992) should see decisive actions either fully under way or being initiated across the full range of resolution 44/211. Secretariat actions resulting from governing bodies' responses in late 1990 and in 1991 can now be expected. The launching of UNDP's fifth cycle in 1992 will bring into play many features of the resolution in a wide range of the operational activities of the system.

36. 1990-1991 discussions with Governments on the harmonization of programme cycles with their cycles (inevitably requiring time for such attunement) should begin to produce first concrete results in 1992. General Assembly guidance on integrated or more coherent operational responses to national programme frameworks should equally be taking effect. The work in latter 1990 and 1991 on achieving system-wide common definitions of these and other key programming concepts and terms should now begin to be reflected in the ongoing activities of the country teams of the system with their national associates. A first valuable number of country teams will, by the end of 1992, have received the special orientation earlier described under the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) programme with the ILO Turin Centre; training of other country-level, and country-supporting, staff should also have been adjusted. The guidelines and evolved techniques for country-level simplification, harmonization, and adaptation of rules and procedures should also begin to take root in programming.

37. 1992 will also be the year when General Assembly 1991 decision and guidance on the Director-General's recommendations for improving the effectiveness of field representation can begin to be translated into concrete measures within the overall stream of decentralization. Resultant plans for detailed actions on this provision of the resolution, which has systemic implications for the future work of the United Nations system at the country level, will be reported on by the Director-General to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, through the Economic and Social Council, in the comprehensive policy review that will culminate the three years.

G. Conclusion

38. With the ready collaboration of his colleagues in the system, the Director-General has attempted above, in the minimum time available between the sessions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, to meet the wishes of Member States for a more comprehensive schedule of implementation of resolution 44/211.

39. The Director-General draws to the attention of Member States that, as with the first schedule, and with this revised presentation, their requirements for documentation create an inherent time-lapse that makes it impossible to capture all

that may have begun to happen by the time Member States consider such a schedule. For example, in order to be available to the General Assembly, the foregoing schedule cannot take account of decisions in response to the resolution by governing bodies or subsidiary organs of UNESCO, FAO and ILO expected in October and November of 1990. Every effort will be made to report these responses to the General Assembly and, within available resources, to sustain thereafter an ongoing flow of information on implementation at appropriate times before the next scheduled annual report.

40. As part of this information, and in order to facilitate the monitoring of progress in key areas, appropriate benchmarks will be utilized. These benchmarks will cover such topics as the degree of decentralization and delegation of authority, the extent of national execution, the range and scope of improved programming approaches, the number of shared and common premises, the number of substantive steps taken by governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system to give effect to the resolution. By means of such benchmarks, change will be tracked over a period of time and trends will be analysed in relation to the goals established in the resolution.

II. CONCEPT OF A DOCUMENT CONTAINING THE INTEGRATED OPERATIONAL RESPONSE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM TO NATIONAL PROGRAMME FRAMEWORKS

41. In resolution 44/211, paragraph 17 (g), the General Assembly requested the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation to conduct an independent study aimed at developing, among other possible ways to improve the co-ordination of the United Nations system at the country level, the concept of a document containing the integrated operational response of the system to the national programme framework of the recipient Government for operational activities for development, which would give greater coherence to existing programming instruments.

42. The Director-General was requested to submit this study to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council. The study, by a senior consultant, is provided in an addendum to his 1990 annual report on operational activities (A/45/273/Add.2-E/1990/85/Add.2).

43. The General Assembly in paragraph 17 (g), of its resolution 44/211 further requested the Director-General to include with the study an analysis containing his views on the impact of this approach, in particular on the role of the resident co-ordinator, on the leadership role of UNDP, and on the relationship and relevance of such an approach to the existing co-ordinating mechanisms of the organizations of the United Nations system at the country level, such as National Technical Co-operation Assessment and Programmes (NaTCAPs), round tables and consultative groups, and possible ways to implement the relevant elements contained therein.

44. While the Director-General provided some preliminary observations on this approach in his annual report (A/45/273-E/1990/85), he deferred his full response to the above-mentioned request until he could take into account the reactions of entities of the United Nations system to which he had circulated the consultant's report. He further requested resident co-ordinators to seek the reactions of Governments, and of the United Nations country team. In view of the time needed to obtain these responses, the Director-General advised that he would submit his views and available information in a conference room paper.

45. The present note contains those views, as well as an analysis of any additional information received.

A. Introduction

Overall views

46. The Director-General is most appreciative of the collaboration of entities of the system, in providing their views on the consultant study.

Views from developing countries

47. Some 36 responses have been received to date from resident co-ordinators (16 from Africa, 8 from Asia, 5 from Arab countries, and 7 from Latin America). In about half of the cases, there had been time to consult and receive initial views from Government and various members of the United Nations system country team; the rest reflect the views of the resident co-ordinator. The information covers a representative range of development and co-operation contexts, and is summarized below.

B. Views from developing countries

48. The paramount role and responsibility of the host Governments is universally recognized, but capacities to assume the degree of leadership in programming implicit in paragraph 17 vary.

National programme framework

49. The concept is widely supported and a few Governments have already expressed keen interest to move in this direction either as a new formal exercise or through needed adjustments in the existing instruments (such as NaTCAPs, consultative group meetings or round tables). There appears to be considerable support for joint assessment of needs for technical and related assistance by UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA with appropriate support from specialized agencies. Such joint action at the country level is, however, viewed as contingent on agreement among the concerned organizations and agencies at the headquarters level.

50. The need for United Nations system co-operation for development of a national programme framework in the form of a formal document or as an informal gradual process is underlined in a number of countries. It is assumed that such a framework would eventually be used as a frame of reference for the programming of all external technical assistance and its careful integration with national programmes and resource allocation. Those countries which are firmly in control of programming of external aid or those where aid is currently allocated according to special political factors do not feel the need for any change at this stage. Countries which are "net donors" also do not see the need for any new initiatives. In all cases, however, the minimum immediate requirement would appear to be to achieve what in one report was termed "greater professionalism", especially in project identification, formulation and implementation and rationalization of procedures to ensure, inter alia, fuller integration of external inputs with national inputs for the successful execution of viable national development programmes.

Appraisal and action committee

51. The idea of such a committee was found interesting and worth exploring, although its implementation may be constrained by the human resource or staff situation of the Government on the one hand, and the current ambiguities and weaknesses in the United Nations system representation at the country level on the other hand. Some Governments have specifically stated their intention to use the existing co-ordinating mechanisms in their Ministries or Departments of Co-operation or Foreign Affairs for this purpose. The attitude and progress towards a central operational mechanism such as the proposed Action and Appraisal Committee will be influenced by the nature and extent of joint or collaborative programming that is agreed upon and adhered to in relation to UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO and other United Nations system inputs.

Resident co-ordinators

52. There is a unanimity of view in the comments received that any progress towards the development of a national programme framework, joint assessment of needs, or joint appraisal of country programmes, is contingent on further clarification and strengthening of the role of the resident co-ordinator in terms of relationships with agency representatives at the country level and the resources at his or her command in the country office or through support arrangements with agencies' headquarters.

Harmonization and simplification of procedures

53. Harmonization of programme cycles among Joint Consultative Group on Policy members (particularly UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA) has already been agreed to in principle. There is support among resident co-ordinators for simplification and harmonization of definitions, procedures, formats, rules and regulations on the lines proposed in the consultant's report.

Country statement

54. There are no specific comments on the concepts or contents of a country statement visualized in paragraph 17 (g) of resolution 44/211. There are passing references in some comments, however, that any change in current practices, through proposed joint situation analysis and needs assessment exercises or joint programming, should aim at reducing rather than adding to the existing statements or documentation, as well as work-load of all concerned.

Conclusions

55. It would thus appear, on the one hand, that in a small number of countries the status quo is likely to be maintained. On the other hand, at least two countries are reported to have already taken concrete steps towards initiating collaborative programming at the country level in a formal sense. A majority of the countries favour a gradual shift to the approach proposed.

56. It is apparent that most of the host Governments will continue to rely on active United Nations system involvement to put into practice comprehensive situation analyses and assessment of needs exercises, which eventually should serve as frames of reference for bilateral as well as multilateral technical and related assistance within the framework of existing and continuing national development programmes. Specific actions visualized are:

(a) Consolidation and internalization of NaTCAPs where these are being tested;

(b) Financial and technical support by external agencies to fill the gaps in human resources and resource constraints in several least developed countries;

(c) Harmonization and simplification of procedures;

(d) Increased professionalism in project identification, formulation, appraisal and implementation;

(e) Further clarification and strengthening of the role of resident co-ordinator as an independent "arbiter" at the country level.

C. Views of the Director-General

57. The Director-General believes that efforts now under way are sound and offer a way forward, although further work and experimentation are required. At the outset of his observations, he wishes to re-emphasize some fundamental points contained in resolution 44/211.

(a) The implementation of paragraph 17 of that resolution must be Government-led. It should assist the strengthening of Governments' capacities to define priority goals and strategies for use of the available resources of the

United Nations system, and to co-ordinate the programming of these and all other external resources;

(b) The programme approach should be used to bring to bear domestic and external resources more effectively upon well-analysed priority development problems, with greater and more durable impact;

(c) The implementation should be accompanied by flexibility of response and by a far more decentralized system. This implies country-specificity, not new uniform models.

58. In addition to conducting an independent study aimed at developing the concept of the United Nations system's integrated operational response, the Director-General has been requested to suggest possible ways to implement the relevant elements contained in such an approach. He will attempt to do this, and to address the particular elements cited in paragraph 17 (g), in the sequence in which the evolution of the total process may be envisaged.

59. The Director-General agrees with the consultant that the question of a national programme framework (para. 17 (a)) has to be addressed in order to give clarity to the second major phase, the evolution of an integrated operational response of the system to such a framework. While it has been conceptually important to see the national framework and the system's response distinct from one another, in best practice the response would already be developing as the framework itself develops.

1. Government-led programming

60. Although it may exist under other descriptions in some countries, it is believed that the concept of a national programme framework for the operational activities of the United Nations system is sufficiently new to warrant suggesting some initial exploratory steps.

Definitions

61. It would be for each Government to adopt its own comprehensive definition of a national programme framework. The consultant has suggested, in paragraph 39 of his report, a comprehensive outline of the main components of such a framework. It may be useful to highlight, here, his definition of the primary objectives (as set out in paragraph 34 of his report).

> The primary objectives of this holistic approach will be to strengthen linkages between macro-economic planning and sectoral or sub-sectoral strategies for the benefit of government departments as well as the international community in defining the latter's assistance from the recipient country's standpoint more sharply. It will ensure that the development interventions in one sector or programme being supported by one or more external agencies do not unwittingly undermine other development imperatives.

A holistic approach should also help go beyond the priorities of short-term stabilization and adjustment by defining and focusing on long-term development goals.

62. The Director-General would emphasize, from this outline definition, the role of national programme frameworking in enabling Government better:

(a) To identify longer-term development goals towards which the particular comparative advantages of the United Nations system should be engaged;

(b) To perceive how an activity assisted by one United Nations entity could be reinforced by another - or by a non-United Nations assistance source - to ensure comprehensive development;

(c) To use the capacities of the system more effectively, for example, by identifying planning work that could be carried out by an agency even if not "executing" a resultant programme or project; or identifying recurring multidisciplinary technical advice by a combined national/United Nations-system team to be built into a programme; or identifying non-project services that can be provided by the United Nations system;

(d) To be able more fully to identify the requirements of the responding externally assisted programmes for human, budgetary, and physical resources, and thus to reconcile and provide for these requirements. 1/

Shift to a programme approach

63. It would be important, at this initial stage, to explore the implications of paragraph 17 (d) because, as the consultant has elaborated, a programme approach is integral in the total intent of paragraph 17. Two questions need to be considered, namely, what is a programme as distinct from a project; and what would a "national programme framework" for the operational activities of the system result in - a single United Nations system programme in the country?

64. In resolution 44/211, the General Assembly has recognized the differences of programming approaches prevailing [illegible]e system. The adoption of national programme frameworks using the progra[illegible]e approach could, however, make possible the elaboration of a responding United Nations system programme of programmes. In this connection, it should be borne in mind that any national programme consists, operationally, of sets of programmes. The difference in a new approach would be that these programmes would be cross-related, and would not be mere collections of projects.

65. The over-arching United Nations system response would be a range of new and strengthened responses and mechanisms containing the integrated operational response of the system referred to in paragraph 17 (g). If successfully evolved, it would fulfil the strategic purposes outlined. The document would describe the overall goals set for the system's co-operation, how these above-outlined purposes would be met, and with what incremental development results expected over the cycle.

66. In and from the various (country) programmes making up the over-arching United Nations-system integrated response, there might be "projects" - if still so described. Under the programme approach, however, these would be temporary external reinforcements of longer-term streams of national development activity, to produce increments that can be sustained and further built upon by national institutions. A well-evolved national programme framework will itself do much of the analytical and reinforcement-identifying work undoubtedly required to shift to a programme approach.

67. The Director-General has already noted, in the main text of his annual report in reference to the consultant's study, another potential benefit and reduced burden through national frameworks using the programme approach - the opportunity to develop more coherent ways to address the issue of local (including salary support) costs.

Governments' exploratory steps

68. With the above definitions - to be refined and adjusted in each country - Governments might set about evolving national programme frameworks by an exploratory exercise.

69. Governments might wish to make a thorough examination of what such a framework would mean in their individual development planning and programming context. This exercise might usefully involve dialogue with the resident co-ordinator and the system's country team. The examination might address the following key questions:

(a) What has been the experience to date in efforts to co-ordinate United Nations system programming? Have there been particular respects, including particular development problems or sectors, where there was a lack of coherent programming of the resources of the system, and why? Problems on both sides of the partnership could be identified and remedies sought to gear up for the new process;

(b) How important would it be to engage other, non-United Nations external assistance resources in the same programme framework? This would depend on such factors as the nature of intended use of other resources and whether such wider co-ordination in programming would be valuable in a given sector. The Director-General would urge that all opportunities be used to try to extend the reach and strategic programming benefits of national programme frameworks to as much of the total operational external assistance flow as possible;

(c) What mechanism would be used to evolve the national programme framework? As the resident co-ordinators' reports indicate, Governments may wish first to survey the landscape for existing mechanisms that could be used. The concept may well afford the opportunity for a review of such machinery, with possible adaptation to serve the framework purpose, including identification of possible assistance that would be needed from the United Nations system in some countries to strengthen capacities for the purpose. Resolution 44/211 must not result in the addition of unnecessary new layers of bureaucratic procedure and burden upon Governments.

The pre-programming stage

70. It was suggested above that the two ostensibly distinct elements, a national framework and an integrated United Nations-system response, may in practice evolve together. The starting point for this may in many countries be the pre-programming, analytical process; the harmonization of programme cycles; and the shift to a programme approach; in other words, the implementation of paragraphs 17 (b), (c), and (d). These are integral in the success of the whole provision, starting with 17 (c).

Harmonization of cycles

71. The Director-General fully agrees with the consultant that one of the propitious changes within the United Nations system, already taking place, is the common decision of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA to harmonize their programming cycles with that of each Government, if so requested. As well, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) believe that the increased government co-ordination that would result would encourage further synchronization and complementarity of their assistance (see Joint Consultative Group on Policy letter provided in addendum 3 to the annual report). The Director-General would hope that the same interest would be expressed by other entitites of the system that do not have programming cycles as such.

72. This indeed is a foundation stone of national programme frameworks for the operational activities of the system. It will mean that, for the first time in the majority of developing countries, Governments can apply a considerable proportion of the grant-based resources likely to be available from the system to their forward national development goals and needs, in one time-frame.

Existing United Nations system mechanisms

73. The existence in countries of such mechanisms as round tables or consultative groups, and NaTCAPs, raises the question, how much can these exercises contribute to the elaboration of a national programme framework for the operational activities of the system?

74. There can be no one definition of how the evolution of such frameworks may benefit from UNDP-sponsored round tables or World Bank-led consultative groups. The essential question is probably how far below macro-policy dialogue (fiscal, distributional and other issues), how far below macro-economic planning, and how far below the overall targetting of external resource flows, these exercises can go towards holistic operational development strategies and programme formulations. Some sector components go further downwards towards the planning dimension that will be involved in the proposed national programme frameworks. New UNDP work to add policy frames for technical co-operation into the preparation for these meetings will provide an important further bridge. Nevertheless, there would seem to be a distance between the planes on which round tables and consultative groups usually work, and the more operational levels addressed in paragraph 17 of resolution 44/211.

NaTCAPs

75. UNDP NaTCAPs, when achieving a priority technical co-operation plan and programme for a developing country as a whole, come closer to national programme frameworks for the operational activities of the system. They do not, however (as the consultant points out) encompass non-technical co-operation assistance available through the system's operational activities. The fact that these various mechanisms do not at present engage the total analytical and programming resources of the United Nations system further limits their role for this approach.

76. In the foregoing observations, however, the Director-General does not wish to rule out the possibility of country-by-country adjustments of these existing mechanisms, which are not set in immutable concrete. It seems, however, realistic to conclude at this stage that while their analyses will in many cases provide starting points, the evolution of national programme frameworks for operational activities may in many countries require work of a different character.

Pre-programming analyses

77. It was suggested above that the practical evolution of a national programme framework for the operational activities of the system will begin with good situation and needs analysis. These analyses should have as their outcome not only the identification of needs but also of prior experience in trying to meet those needs and, from both, fresh and realistic objectives - in short, goals and policy frames for operational programmes, with a clear understanding of what concrete increments in the national development process should be obtained from each planned activity, and how.

78. As described in the consultant's report (paras. 27-33), many organizations of the system nowadays carry out such analyses with government and other national institutions, but largely or wholly independent of each other. With cycle harmonization, this pre-programming work could henceforth be better synchronized.

79. The Director-General accordingly urges that full attention be given by Governments and the relevant organizations and agencies of the system to provision 17 (b). Every effort should, of course, be made to make use of the analytical work of existing country-level mechanisms, and (an often neglected element) to correlate the analyses of other external agencies.

80. There are, however, three other important aspects of this new opportunity that should not be neglected. The sector-type reviews of specialized agencies and other technical entities will often need synchronizing in order to achieve necessary cross-analysis, and this will undoubtedly entail considerable adjustment, and adequate advance requests. There may be problems of heavy demand on capacities within the same periods. Secondly, the financing of such work by agencies is, at time of preparation of these views, an important consideration in the question of successor arrangements for support costs. Thirdly, resident co-ordinators will need the resources to make adequate arrangements for the analytical or review services of smaller entities of the system that have no country-level staff, yet

whose collaboration in the new pre-programming work will often be vital to achieve well-rounded development programmes.

The process of elaborating national frameworks

81. Where and when would these more harmonized and cross-related pre-programming analytical processes fit into the elaboration of the national programme framework? As previously emphasized, the Director-General does not believe that any uniform model would be adduced from the intent of paragraph 17 of resolution 44/211. It may, however, be useful to try to identify a possible sequence of processes:

(a) The paramount need is to enable Governments to assemble a coherent framework for the country's next requirements of the operational activities of the system. As earlier iterated, it should be a framework that is based on national and appropriate globally agreed goals and output objectives; that programmes and reinforces linkages between activities envisaged for co-operation from the United Nations system; and that realistically forecasts the demands which those activities (alongside other external assistance) will make upon the country's own resources;

(b) Such a programme framework would be prepared by Government, based on its national development priorities and overall plan strategies, with the assistance of the resident co-ordinator and system, as requested. In most countries, the framework could draw upon the analytical and review work available from funds and agencies of the system, including World Bank country studies;

(c) The first stage might be Government's enunciation of a broad "indicative national programme framework", to be tested and refined by analysis and assessment carried out by national institutions with the relevant entities of the system;

(d) Supported by the United Nations country team, Governments might make the identification of the main lines of a new framework an objective of mid-term country programme and major project reviews (the mid-term reviews of UNDP country programmes are increasingly being used for equivalent forecasting). The system's various situation analyses, needs assessments, sector and programme reviews and strategy development exercises might then be even more effectively orchestrated in a common time-frame about two years to refine that indicative framework into its final form for the next cycle;

(e) Where available, UNDP NaTCAPs could be drawn upon, especially so that their assessments would contribute to ensuring that work to strengthen national capacities for programme and project execution would be built into every appropriate activity under the national programme framework. Where not available, the equivalent effort would be highly desirable;

(f) The advantage of this sequence would be that both the Government's refined national programme framework and the responding proposed programmes of the system would be derived from a common data base and set of analyses and reviews.

Emergence of responsive programmes of the system

82. As the Director-General has already noted, paragraph 17 of resolution 44/211 does not change the existing pattern of preparation of individual UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF country programmes, or the equivalent IFAD, WFP and, for example, WHO processes. The new elements would be that these could (a) relate to the Government's indicative national programme framework; (b) benefit from far more cross-related pre-programming analysis, within a common time-frame; and (c) enable Government and the partners of the system to adjust the actual programmes before their finalization.

83. Some entities of the system that do not have programme cycles have raised the question of how they would participate in these processes. While in all respects the Director-General does not wish to be overly prescriptive in his observations, he does interpret paragraph 17 (g) as meaning an integrated response to national programme frameworks by all elements of operational activities of the system to the maximum extent feasible. This would accordingly include regular technical co-operation programme resources of agencies, extrabudgetary resources and related capital assistance, to the maximum extent that formulation of such activities could take place within the framework period. It would be a particular responsibility of the country team led by the resident co-ordinator, in continuous consultation with Government, to try to ensure that all such capacities were tapped at the right time in the process.

84. The Director-General wishes to suggest that the aim should be to orchestrate the process of formulating programmes and other activities of the sytstem in response to the national framework in such a way that as many of them as possible could then be "placed on a table" together, for cross-examination by the relevant national authorities and country team partners.

85. This would offer major advantages in the entire process, complementing all that would have gone before. It would be the moment when, for example, the proposed UNICEF programme evolved with its particular national partner institutions according to its mandates could be seen side by side with relevant components of the proposed programme of another organization, and both with (again, for example) the equivalent response formulations of WHO on one hand and WFP on the other. This kind of cross-programming already happens in various countries with one or another combination of entities of the system.

86. It would be when the responsive proposed programmes and other forward-formulated activities of the system - already having benefited from the maximum analytical and advisory use of the system's capacities - were laid out "on the table" side by side, that Government and the United Nations country team could "fine-tune" mutual reinforcements, bring to bear non-technical co-operation inputs with capacity-strengthening activities and, hopefully, identify other external resources that could be strategically engaged in given thematic or sectoral programmes.

Cross-programmed reserve listing

87. To these prospects, the Director-General would like to add an element which he believes to be of considerable importance, namely, that of formulating integrated or cross-programmed "reserve lists" of development needs beyond indicative resource allocations available at that particular time. The new feature would be the opportunity also to see these development needs in terms of the cross-sectoral or integrative needs that are to date usually missed. The practical applicability of this feature might seem limited; but if, for example, it consisted of no more than listing "for future funding" the extension to a wider area of a comprehensive rural development programme fashioned among entities of the system under a national programme framework, this would surely be valuable. Far too often, the absence of any opportunity for advance cross-formulation of this kind has rendered ad hoc-financed projects unsustainable.

Shape of responsive programmes

88. It bears repeating that, subject to the respective mandates and approval procedures of all the various entities of the system, what the resultant responsive "programme of programmes" would look like would be entirely specific to each country's needs and circumstances. In one country with a particular set of forward priorities, the overall programme might be concentrated in one thematic area. In another, it might take the shape of cluster-programmes, in their totality spanning a wide range of development problems, but with each well formulated for strategic intervention, needed reinforcements, and maximum sustainability.

89. In some countries, the process might well be telescoped; that is to say, the national programme framework as prepared by Government in consultation with the system might itself be adopted as the system's "response document" - and the chapeau to individual country programmes. In all countries, the challenge for the partners will be to fashion a genuinely integrative operational response to a national programme framework from within which any entity of the system can submit its "country programme" (or equivalent) to its governing body, fully meeting that body's particular mandates.

Machinery for appraisal, fine-tuning, and monitoring

90. The question obviously arises, through what machinery led by Government would the proposed constituent elements of the integrated operational response be placed on a table and finally examined together - and the response programme thereafter be perodically monitored and adjusted?

91. The consultant has suggested as one possibility an "appraisal and action committee", chaired by a senior and influential representative of the Government, with membership from appropriate line departments, the United Nations system, and, if so wished, other external agencies. The consultant further outlines (in paras. 41-42 of his report) the functions that could be performed by such a committee, including the assembly of the response "document" that could provide the "chapeau" for each entity's programme as submitted to its governing body.

92. The point, however, is not to propose a categorical new committee for every country undertaking the implementation of paragraph 17 but, rather, to indicate what work would undoubtedly need to be carried out to complete, and then monitor, the total process. It would of course be for each Government to determine how to do this, naturally using or adapting existing machinery before considering creating a new mechanism. Again, the first resident co-ordinator reports would seem to indicate this likely response.

93. The vital element, however, would be that these appraisal and fine-tuning and monitoring functions be truly Government-led.

2. Impact on the United Nations system

General observations

94. It will already be apparent even from the foregoing outline of possible implementation of paragraph 17 of resolution 44/211 that it will involve adjustments for virtually all parts of the United Nations system that engage in operational activities. The concept of national programme frameworks and integrated operational responses of the system is in a sense catalytic of much of the "action plan" within the resolution as a whole. The approach positively requires significant decentralization. It brings into further sharp relief the primordial objective of genuinely government-led programming, co-ordination, and implementation. It requires the adoption of the programme approach, and a far more multidisciplinary perspective upon and formulation of operational activities.

95. The Director-General believes, from the generally very positive response of the system, that the changes can be achieved. It will require trenchant consultation over the next year or so to identify all the more detailed adjustments that the implementation of paragraph 17 will entail. Here, the Director-General will note only some of the more salient elements of this process.

Provision of technical advice

96. As has been indicated at least in outline, if the maximum benefit is to be drawn by Governments from the particular capacities of the system for these processes, the readjustment of agencies and other technical entities to enable more readily available technical advisory and analytical services at country level will be an important component of implementation of this provision. Thus, paragraph 17 of resolution 44/211 has close linkage with paragraphs 15 (a) and (c).

Role of smaller agencies

97. In this connection the Director-General reiterates, because of its special importance, that the elaboration of an integrated operational response of the system at the country level must be so fashioned - and resourced - that entities of the system that do not have staff in every developing country will be enabled to make their valuable contributions, at the right time. The very nature of national

programme frameworking and of elaborating an integrated operational response will expose, more than ever before, the subtle reinforcements needed in holistic development interventions that in a great many cases lie within the particular capabilities of smaller agencies. These have often been neglected due to lack of coherent programming, with serious consequences to the viability of programmes and projects.

98. The Director-General will, as proposed in the main text of his annual report, seek to ensure the use of the appropriate interorganizational machinery to examine and orchestrate the numerous adjustments that the foregoing and many other elements in implementing paragraph 17 will entail. He will report progressively on these processes during the next two years.

Impact on the role of the resident co-ordinator

99. In their comments on the consultant's study a number of organizations have noted, as he has, that there will be major additional burdens upon the United Nations resident co-ordinator in the implementation of paragraph 17. UNDP has observed that this issue has wide implications (including the question of the financing of co-ordination) that lie beyond the scope of the study carried out under paragraph 17 (g).

100. Again, the Director-General sees this question within the larger context of the implementation of many of the action provisions of resolution 44/211. There can be no doubt whatever that paragraph 17 inherently calls for a far more dynamic role for, and has major implications of work-load upon, the resident co-ordinator. It is worth emphasizing, here as well, that this work-load will not only be that of leader of a team of co-ordinators at the country level evolving the comprehensive responses to national programme frameworking. The resident co-ordinator must also carefully help Government to ensure that the development needs which are the specialization of entities of the system not on the ground are appropriately met, and the services of such entities engaged as necessary, to help achieve an adequately comprehensive response by the system.

101. In paragraph 16, the Director-General is requested to report comprehensively in 1991, with specific recommendations, on the improvement and increased effectiveness of the field representation of the United Nations system, in respect of all functions of resolution 44/211. This must clearly include the functions of paragraph 17. He is also requested, in paragraph 15 (c), to report on the provision of multidisciplinary advice by the system at country level, including the concept of multidisciplinary teams. He proposes to examine within a composite study of these questions, in close consultation with the Administrator of UNDP, and other entities of the system, the entire question of the respective work-loads of the United Nations resident co-ordinator and the UNDP resident representative. The study will naturally encompass the leadership role of UNDP referred to in paragraph 17 (g). For this study, he expects to derive additional guidance from the views of Member States on the present observations, and the consultant's report, as also from the responses when available by resident co-ordinators following their country-level consultations on a national programme framework and an integrated operational response of the system.

3. Conclusion and recommendation

102. The Director-General offered a number of broad desiderata on this question in the main text of his annual report, and he incorporates these in the present conclusions. He believes that the provisions in paragraph 17 of resolution 44/211 constitute valuable contribution to greater coherence, comprehensive policy-orientation, and a programme approach to developing countries' needs of the United Nations system in its operational activities.

103. The implementation of these provisions by the system must be country-specific, flexible, cost-effective by taking into account existing mandates, and imaginative in avoiding adding new layers of bureaucratic procedure and documentation. It should at all times aim to maximize the comparative advantages, and the particular experience and attributes, of each component entity of the United Nations system. Within the overall concept of "a programme of programmes", such coherence should expose and exploit opportunities to achieve a wide range of variants in co-ordination to mount more strategic attacks on poverty and under-capacitation.

104. The evolution of national programme frameworks, and an integrated operational response of the system to them, will require time; yet no developing country Government itself wishing to start the effort should be asked to wait while some selective pilot schemes are attempted. The Director-General has framed his recommendation with these factors in mind.

Recommendation

105. Governments of developing countries should be invited to proceed with the implementation of paragraph 17 (a) of resolution 44/211, in accordance with their own development plans and priorities and programming and co-ordination procedures, and with such assistance in strengthening their capacities for these purposes as they may request of the United Nations system. The Director-General should identify among implementing countries a representative range of national circumstances and co-ordination and programming capacities and machinery, and invite the particular collaboration of those Governments in monitoring their experience. He should report on those experiences, and on overall progress, in his annual report in 1991 and, comprehensively, for the triennial policy review in 1992 with further recommendations as he may judge appropriate.

106. The entities of the United Nations system should proceed with the implementation of an integrated operational response of the system at the country level under the leadership of the resident co-ordinator and in consultation with Government, bearing in mind the various mandated provisions of other General Assembly resolutions and the procedures established by their governing bodies. Information on the implementation of this integrated operational response should also be included in the annual report of the Director-General for 1991 and the triennial policy review in 1992.

107. In providing information on the implementation of this approach, due account should be taken of the implications of paragraph 17 for the United Nations system, including for the terms of reference of the resident co-ordinator. In the annual report for 1991, experience arising from the implementation of paragraph 17 should be related to the analysis of possible ways and means of providing multidisciplinary technical advice from the United Nations system at the country level as requested in paragraph 15 (c), and on the improvements in the effectiveness of the field representation of the United Nations system called for in paragraph 16. Moreover, the eventual impact on the work-load of the resident co-ordinator resulting from the implementation of the resolution, in addition to his or her functions as UNDP resident representative, should be reviewed as well, in consultation with the UNDP Administrator and the heads of other entities of the system.

III. NATIONAL EXECUTION

A. Views of the resident co-ordinators

108. Further to the information provided in his 1990 annual report, (paras. 104-113), the Director-General provides in this annex a brief updating on the prospect for national execution. This information reflects additional responses received from resident co-ordinators as well as the outcome of the thirty-seventh session of the Governing Council of UNDP.

109. While the additional reports confirm the general conclusions conveyed in the annual report, they do, none the less, underline a range of difficulties that many countries face in achieving a more general use of national execution of programmes and projects assisted by the United Nations system. These conclusions referred to difficulties with rules and procedures, both of Governments and of United Nations organizations, including audit requirements. The lack of human resources, including adequate civil service conditions was also cited as a major problem. The establishment of UNDP-assisted support units within Governments to manage nationally executed projects was also considered essential, as was having the continued co-operation of agencies of the United Nations system.

110. The responses confirm variations in the practices of the organization of the United Nations system. Prospects for the more general use of national execution are clearly determined by prevailing local circumstances such as the willingness by the Government to assume greater executing responsibilities, the level of institutional and staff capacities, and the flexibility of Government financial and administrative rules. It is interesting to note that the extent of national execution appears not to be directly related to general levels of economic development. Thus, some countries enjoying a relatively higher level of development make only modest use of the modality, while in some less developed countries national execution may reach up to 40 per cent of all projects.

111. At present, 59 responses have been received from resident co-ordinators (23 from Africa, 10 from Arab States, 15 from Asia and the Pacific, 11 from Latin America and the Caribbean and 1 from Europe). Of this sample, 17 resident co-ordinators serve in least developed countries. Of the 24 additional reports received since the preparation of the annual report, 10 indicate that there is at present no national execution; in another 10 only minimal, or very recent, and as yet inconclusive experience has been acquired of the modality.

B. Conclusions

112. Among the general conclusions that can be derived from the responses by resident co-ordinators are that:

(a) The wider use of national execution will be achieved gradually as the capacities at the national levels of government entities and non-governmental organizations are strengthened;

(b) Substantial efforts in capacity-building are still needed in many developing countries before a fuller use of national execution can be achieved. These efforts should include special training for national officers designated to handle national execution. Moreover, provision should be made for the establishment of full-time positions with appropriate salary levels and other arrangements ensuring the continued involvement of these national officers with national execution;

(c) In addition to measures at the country level, action will be needed at the central level, including the simplification, harmonization and adaptation of rules and procedures governing all aspects of the project cycle, with special attention to audit requirements. These changes should be reflected in an easy-to-use manual, which should also clarify concepts and approaches. At present, several resident co-ordinators report local attempts at producing manuals. It may be preferable to have a single, basic standard manual in order to avoid potential confusion as concerns the options available to Governments, particularly with respect to agency involvement under national execution, as well as to ensure full accountability;

(d) As the expanded use of national execution may in a number of cases involve a more active involvement of UNDP field offices in support of various implementation services, including direct recruitment of project personnel and procurement of equipment, as well as audit requirements, further consideration may need to be given to the role of these field offices;

(e) The role of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system will also require continued review;

(f) Greater decentralization of United Nations operational activities to the country level will be essential to the further expansion of national execution.

C. Governing Council of UNDP

113. By its decision 90/21, the Governing Council of UNDP adopted a set of measures that will undoubtedly facilitate the increased use of national execution of UNDP-supported projects. Of special interest in this respect is the recognition by the UNDP Governing Council that the fifth cycle commencement in January 1992 and the introduction of successor arrangements for agency support costs provide an opportunity to pursue and accelerate vigorously the process of the national execution of United Nations Development Programme-assisted projects and programmes. In the intervening period, the Council will review in 1991 proposals for assisting recipient Governments to build up their programme management and administrative capacities. This review is expected to take into account issues related to the programme approach; decentralization to the country level, including project management activities; the provision of integrated technical and operational support by the United Nations system; simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures; and the increased use of national institutions and firms.

IV. COMMON PREMISES AND SHARED FACILITIES

A. General comments

114. In his 1989 comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system (A/44/324, annex), the Director-General outlined developments as of that date with respect to the review and rationalization of field structures. The report noted the progress achieved and the various constraints involved. It indicated that the concerned entities of the United Nations system endorsed the principle of common premises and shared facilities, and that the country offices had also indicated broad support.

115. In paragraph 15 (d) of its resolution 44/211, the General Assembly decided "to request all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to make, without delay, the necessary arrangements, in co-operation with host Governments and without additional cost to developing countries, to establish common premises at the country level, and to request the Director-General to include in his annual reports on operational activities information on progress made in that area".

116. In spite of the difficulties previously identified, progress has been achieved in terms of actual construction of common premises (10 countries), active negotiations under way (9 countries) and active consideration (2 countries). It should be noted that common premises have been achieved in all instances in which capacity exists and existing contractual arrangements permit.

B. Joint Consultative Group on Policy

117. The Joint Consultative Group on Policy, composed of UNDP, UNICEF, WFP and IFAD, continued to give high priority to the establishment of common premises and facilities. A permanent Sub-Group on Common Premises and Services has been established to oversee each common premises project, to include planning, design, financing, construction and management.

118. Steps have been initiated to construct common premises for the Joint Consultative Group on Policy members in 12 countries. 2/ In addition, requests for the construction of common premises have been received from Bangladesh, Brazil, Barbados, El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Zaire and Zimbabwe, at a total estimated construction cost of $33 million. Since the funds currently available cannot accommodate these requests, the Sub-Group is exploring alternative sources of funding, as follows:

(a) The modality that is being explored in Zaire is that the Government will donate land to UNDP, which will be leased to a private entity to construct common premises which, in turn, will be leased to UNDP until the cost of construction is repaid. At the end of the lease, the ownership will revert to the entities of the United Nations system participating in the lease;

(b) In Brazil, negotiations are under way on the possibility of IFAD utilizing its non-convertible Brazilian currency to construct common premises and lease it to the United Nations system with the option of ownership reverting to the entities participating in the lease once the construction costs have been recovered.

119. The following developments have taken place with respect to funds available to the Joint Consultative Group on Policy members for common facilities:

(a) The UNICEF Committee on Administration and Finance has recommended, and the Executive Board has approved, the authorization of a Reserve Fund for field office accommodation and staff housing for a total maximum of $22 million, of which 75 per cent ($16.5 million) would be earmarked for field office accommodations relating mainly to UNICEF participation in common premises with other United Nations organizations;

(b) The UNDP Governing Council, in its decision 90/44, has authorized the Administrator to utilize as a last resort, the Reserve for Field Accommodation to purchase office accommodation when such purchases would be shared with organizations of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy and, to the extent possible, other United Nations organizations in the field.

120. As previously indicated, the relevant entities of the United Nations system have indicated their endorsement of the principle of common services and shared facilities. In this connection, UNESCO has advised that the issue of establishing common premises at country level is currently under examination by the Special Committee of the Executive Board and will also be reviewed by the one hundred and thirty-fifth session of the Board in October 1990. Since nearly half of the

current premises of UNESCO field units are offered free of charge by host countries, it is anticipated that the Executive Board will call for an extensive field study relative to compliance with paragraph 15 (d) of General Assembly resolution 41/211.

Notes

1/ The difficulty of identifying, reconciling, and then providing for these requirements has been one of the principal causes of externally assisted projects that "went nowhere", or that have retained an inordinately costly input of external resources at the price of internalizing, and thus of national sustainability.

2/ Angola, Burundi, Cape Verde, the Comoros, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Uganda and Viet Nam.